

VZCZCXRO7957  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHGB #0144/01 0150803  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
P 150803Z JAN 07  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9075  
RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC//NSC//

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000144

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/14/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: SCIRI/BADR LEADERS CONCERNED OVER ESCALATING  
U.S.-IRAN TENSIONS

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S) Summary: SCIRI/Badr leaders, including Abdulaziz al-Hakim, Humam Hamoudi, Hadi al-Amri, Mohsin al-Hakim (son of Abdulaziz al-Hakim), and Rida Jawad Taqi, expressed concern to the Ambassador in a January 12 meeting about escalating tensions between the U.S. and Iran. Briefly describing the January 11 MNF-I operation in Irbil, the Ambassador stressed that Quds Force activities in Iraq were unacceptable and that the U.S. would continue to pursue Quds Force operatives inside Iraq who were facilitating anti-ISF and anti-coalition networks. He urged the SCIRI/Badr leadership to ensure that the relationship between Iraq and Iran was conducted through appropriate, state to state channels. Al-Hakim said that Ayatollah Sistani had given Prime Minister Maliki his support for strict security measures against anyone carrying weapons outside the framework of the state. The Ambassador urged al-Hakim to ensure that Shi'a coalition members attended the Council of Representatives (CoR) and that key bills be passed in January. End summary.

-----  
Sistani, Security, and the President's Speech  
-----

¶2. (C) The Ambassador began by asking about al-Hakim's recent trip to Najaf. Al-Hakim said that he had seen Grand Ayatollahs Ali Al-Sistani and Mohammed Saed al-Hakim, and that Sistani had clearly expressed that it was unacceptable for anyone to carry weapons outside of the framework of the state. Sistani, al-Hakim said, had given Maliki the "green light" to carry out strict security measures without discrimination as to sect. The Ambassador asked for the group's opinion on President Bush's January 10 speech. Hamoudi responded that it was a very good speech, especially in that it emphasized that Iraqis must take responsibility for their government and actions and that the U.S. would play a supporting role as Iraqis took these steps.

-----  
SCIRI Concerned with Escalating U.S.-Iran Tensions  
-----

¶3. (S) The Ambassador then gave a brief description of the January 11 MNF-I operation in Irbil that targeted a senior Quds Force leader suspected of involvement in facilitating malign networks in Iraq. The Ambassador emphasized that Quds Force activities in Iraq were unacceptable and that the U.S. would continue to pursue Quds Force operatives in Iraq. While he understood that while SCIRI and Badr were in the opposition to Saddam's regime they had developed relationships with Quds Force leaders, the Ambassador stated that, as Iraqi leaders, al-Hakim and others had to ensure that relationships with Iran went through proper,

state-to-state channels. He asked the group whether the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense, the Minister of Interior, or the Foreign Minister had known that the Quds Force officers detained on December 21 were in Iraq or what they were doing.

14. (S) No one directly answered the Ambassador's question. Al-Hakim voiced concern that tensions between the U.S. and Iran were escalating, pointing to the President's mention of Patriot missiles. He said according to his information the Quds Force officers detained on December 21 were in Iraq to take a positive message to various groups in Iraq in support of Iraq's stability. He further noted that it was unfortunate that the U.S. and Iran had not talked directly. Mohsin al-Hakim suggested that there be an Iranian-Iraqi dialogue on security issues in Iraq in which U.S. representatives could participate as advisors to the Iraqi side. Hamoudi asked whether Secretary Rice would be able to convince Arab governments to support Iraq. The Ambassador noted that the Secretary was soon making another trip to the region for this purpose, and that she would push very hard for conclusion of the International Compact for Iraq.

-----  
Pushing for Quick Action on Legislation  
-----

15. (C) The Ambassador urged al-Hakim to press the Shi'a coalition's members in the Council of Representatives (CoR) to attend the CoR so that quorum could be achieved and critical legislation passed. Al-Hakim expressed surprise that the CoR was not achieving quorum, turning to Hamoudi for an explanation. Hamoudi told al-Hakim that the CoR was meeting without quorum because it had left the session that began on December 10 "open." (Note: Al-Hakim is a CoR

BAGHDAD 00000144 002 OF 002

member. To the best of our knowledge, he has attended two sessions, the opening session and the session where the regions formation bill was passed. End note.) The Ambassador urged that the hydrocarbon law and the Independent Higher Election Commission (IHEC) law, along with the budget, be passed before the CoR recesses. He also urged al-Hakim to focus on rapid de-Baathification reform. Hamoudi said that he expected the budget and IHEC law to be passed in January, but that the hydrocarbon law would be difficult to pass in January given its complexity, even assuming the Council of Ministers approved it soon. Hadi al-Amri disagreed, saying he thought the oil law could be passed "in ten days," as well as the provincial powers law. (Note: We believe Hamoudi's assessment to be more realistic. End note.)  
KHALILZAD